

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 953

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 6054

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS MNUC TW

SUBJECT: ROC NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REV: A. STATE 217955, B. STATE 214981

1. BACKGROUND CONVERSATION WITH FOX BUTTERFIELD THIS MORNING ABOUT NUCLEAR QUESTIONS WAS AMICABLE AND HE APPEARED PREPARED FOR MY DECLINING TO DISCUSS SEVERAL MATTERS ABOUT WHICH HE INQUIRED. HE LEFT ME WITH IMPRESSION HE INTENDS TO WRITE A STORY WHICH MAY SEEK TO CLARIFY KINDS OF REPROCESSING UNDER CONSIDERATION HERE; BELIEVE IT MAY ALSO ENCOURAGE READER TO CONCLUDE THAT US NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED ABOUT WHAT ROC MAY BE ENGAGED IN AND, PERHAPS AS CONSEQUENCE, US MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN HERETOFORE IN DEALING WITH TAIWAN ON NUCLEAR MATTERS. HE WILL ALSO CITE INDIAN EXPERIENCE AS ADDITIONAL REASON FOR US RESTRICTIONS.

2. BUTTERFIELD BEGAN BY SUGGESTING THAT SOME OF RECENT PRESS CONFUSION MAY HAVE ARISEN FROM LOOSE USE OF TERM "REPROCESSING". I ACKNOWLEDGED THIS POSSIBILITY AND CLARIFIED WHAT IS KNOWN TO BE CONTEMPLATED HERE IN TERMS OF SECOND Q&A REFTEL B. BUTTERFIELD CONJECTURED THAT CONTINUED ABSENCE OF USG RESPONSE TO GROC OCTOBER 1975 REQUEST TO PROCEED WITH REPROCESSING LABORATORY (SIC) PROBABLY MEANS DISAPPROVAL BUT I AVOIDED ANY CONFIRMATION OF THAT.

3. BUTTERFIELD REFERRED ALSO TO FEELERS PUT OUT BY GROC EMBASSY

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WASHINGTON TO AEC AND OTHERS SEVERAL YEARS AGO ABOUT REPROCESSING

PLANT (NOT LABORATORY) ON WHICH HE BELIEVED ROC HAD BEEN DISCOURGAGED.

MY ONLY COMMENT WAS TO REFER TO POSITION TAKEN WORLDWIDE
WITH REGARD TO NATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PLANTS,
MENTIONING RECENT PAKISTAN AND IRAN CASES, AND HE ADDED SOUTH KOREA.

4. TO SUPPORT IDEA THAT US BECOMING MORE RESTRICTIVE BUTTERFIELD
REFERRED TO DIFFICULTY ENCOUNTERED BY CHING HUA RESEARCH REACTOR
IN SECURING FURTHER FUEL FROM GENERAL ATOMIC IN SAN DIEGO. HE
SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT FUEL CURRENTLY ON ORDER, WHICH IS
IDENTICAL WITH WHAT WAS SUPPLIED EARLIER, BEING HELD UP AND
CHINESE APPARENTLY THINK THEY HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THIS IS BECAUSE
OF RELATIVELY HIGH ENRICHMENT.

5. BUTTERFIELD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS REFERRED TO INFORMATION
GIVEN HIM A YEAR AGO BY HIGH-RANKING USG OFFICIALS AND MORE
RECENTLY GIVEN TO NY TIMES MAN BINDER (WHO WAS SEEKING CONFIRMATION
OF INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY GIVEN SCHUMACHER) TO EFFECT THAT TAIWAN
SECRETLY REPROCESSING SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL. I MANDE NO COMMENT.
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